

# How to Use the National Archives of Sweden

## Website, Riksarkivet

By Geoffrey Fröberg Morris AG<sup>®</sup>

The National Archives of Sweden (Riksarkivet) is one of the oldest authorities of the Swedish government with roots back to the 1200s. Under King Gustav Vasa many documents were gathered into the archive which was in the Tre Kronor Castle in Stockholm. By chancellery order Riksarkivet was established on 16 October 1618. Tragically, the castle burned down in 1697 and a large part of the medieval archive was destroyed. Between 1713-1716 many of the most important documents were shipped to Örebro castle due to the Russian threat of the Great Nordic War.

During the early to mid-1800s Riksarkivet was largely focused on records of national importance. By the late 1800s the focus to archive records expanded to include central and local authorities with the establishment of regional archives. The military archive was incorporated into Riksarkivet in 1995. In 2010 the regional archives (which previously functioned independently) were combined with Riksarkivet. With the reorganization of 2020, the title of regional archives (Landsarkiv) was removed, and the provincial areas of jurisdiction were restructured. Riksarkivet is an administrative authority under the Ministry of Culture.

Riksarkivet is organized into 4 departments:

- Department for Archive Activities
- Department of Conservation and Digital infrastructure
- Department of Public Information Management
- Department for Business Support

The department for archive activities is responsible for the 10 regional archives grouped into 5 pairs, Arninge-Krigsarkivet, Göteborg-Lund, Härnösand-Östersund, Marieberg-Visby, and Uppsala-Vadstena.<sup>1</sup> Although Riksarkivet serves as a government archive, it also preserves documents from private individuals, organizations, and companies. The goal is to preserve collections and provide access over time. Some of these acquired or donated collections date back to the 1600 and 1700s.

### Collections

Riksarkivet has a wide variety of records and documents that were used for many different purposes at the national, regional, county, and local level. They have around 100,000 maps and drawings (many of which are architectural drawings of civil buildings) from 1697 – 1993. As of 2015, Riksarkivet has about 75 Swedish miles (465 US miles) of records on shelves in 10 locations. About 5% of collections are accessible online through the Digital Research Room.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landsarkiv\\_\(Sverige\)](https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landsarkiv_(Sverige))

## How to Use Riksarkivet for Genealogy

You can search records and databases on Riksarkivet for free (no registration or sign-in is required).

1. Go to <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/>
2. Click on **Other Languages** in the upper right corner of the screen and click on **English**.  
Another option is to run it in Swedish after learning key words to navigate the website.
3. Under the heading Digital Research Room click on the tab **Digital Research Room**
4. From here, you see 6 tile icons. Here is a description of what each choice offers.

## Topics

This is a place where you can find records by subject. After you click on Topics you see 28 links. Although there are many interesting topics that might apply to your research problem, most of the time you will go to:

- **Topics: Genealogy:** Leads to 7 sections, Orphanage, Church Records, Census, Statistics Sweden, Mantalsskrivning, Divorce, and Private collections. Some of these links point to searchable databases while others do not. The non-searchable links point to collections where you can browse digitized records.

- **Genealogy: Church Records**

For church records, look for the link called **Kyrkoarkiv** under the heading Church Records.<sup>2</sup> This is where you search church records such as birth, marriage, death, moving -in, and -out, and household examination records as follows:

1. Type the name of the parish in the Search archive / parish field (you must use the Swedish letters Å, Ä, and Ö as needed).
2. Choose the County from the dropdown list (although this step is not required, sometimes there are parishes by the same name in multiple counties).
3. Click Search.

After the page reloads, a link with the name of the parish should be shown with the word kyrkoarkiv (church archive) next to it. Click on the link, and you will see a list of all digitized collections for this parish. Click on the word Image to begin searching the volume.

Click on the Topics tab to return to the 28 links. If you want to find departure lists, click on the link **Emigration**. This leads to digitized images of emigration sources. Riksarkivet does not offer a database to search for emigrants.

- **Topics: Taxes**

From the Topics page, click on the link **Taxes**. The tax records are especially useful when you want to research in a period before the earliest household examination records. Of the many types of tax records, you will use the Mantalslängder the most.

1. Click on **Mantalslängder 1642-1820**.
2. Choose a County from the dropdown menu.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/kyrkoarkiv>

3. Type the name of the parish in the Parish field (use Swedish letters Å, Ä, and Ö if needed) and click Search.
4. Find the year and volume that you need and then click on **Image** out to the right.

- **Topics: Military**

For Military records, go back to the Topics tab and then click on **Military**. This opens to a page of 100 links in a wide variety of subjects. You can look for topics for the Army (Armé) or Navy (Båtsmansrullor, or Flottan) or other topics. You can also search the Statistical Summary of The Swedish Allotment System (*Statistiskt sammandrag af svenska indelningsverket*) by clicking **Indelningsverket (Grill)** to find the regiment and company information to search the General Muster Rolls. You can find the General Muster Rolls by clicking on the link **Generalmönsterrullor** from the Military tab.

- **Topics: Crime and punishment: Court archives**

If you need to search in the court records (e.g. find an unknown father before 1866), you would choose the topic Crime and punishment on the Topics page and then click on the link **Domstolsarkiv** (Court archives). This is where you will find court records such as the minutes from court sessions, and estate inventories. Do this by:

1. Typing the name of the district (häradsrätt) in the Search archive / parish field (you might need to add an "s" to the end of the district name e.g., Ljunits to get the search result).
2. Click on the name of the district with the words **häradsrätts arkiv**.
3. Choose the volume you need and click on **Image**.

Let's continue through the other options in the Digital Research Room. The icon called Databases leads to two columns, **Scanned** and **Databases with transcribed material**. The Scanned column offers links to search a variety of record types including the Church archives, Mantals tax records (called Register of population 1642-1820), Court archives, and the General Muster Rolls.

- **Scanned: SCB births, marriages and deaths 1860-1949**

There is also a link to the SCB births, marriages, and deaths 1860-1949. This is where you can find the birth, marriage, and death extracts created by the Statistiska centralbyrån (SCB). The information was extracted from the ministerial books and sent to government. This is helpful if the ministerial books after 1860 were lost or destroyed. Do this by:

1. Typing the name of the parish in the Parish field.
2. Choose a County from the dropdown list.
3. Click Search.
4. Choose the year and volume by clicking on the word Image.

Going back to the Database page we see useful tools on the right side under Databases with transcribed material. These are collections that have been indexed into searchable databases. They include:

- **Databases with transcribed material: Census**

This is where you can search the SCB extracts from household examination-congregation records for the years 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, and 1930. These extracts were created every 10 years. They represent a "snapshot" of the respective year. Although Riksarkivet calls these censuses, the original information came from church household examination or congregation records. Search this by clicking on **Census**:

1. Type the First name, Last name, approximate Birth year, Birth parish (and or) Home parish into the respective fields, and then click Search. You can search by using all the fields or very few fields as necessary e.g., if the ancestor had a very unique name, you can search by name alone.
2. Click on the name of the individual to see the indexed data.

- **Databases with transcribed material: Inventory of estates**

This is where you can search for an estate inventory (*bouppteckning*). Do this by:

1. Typing the First name, Last name, Place of residence, (and or) Home parish into the respective fields and click Search. You can hover your mouse pointer on the little “i” for search tips. Click on More options to narrow down your search to a specific County.
2. To see the digital copies of estate inventories, look for the Name of the ancestor, next to a computer monitor icon, and then click on **Image**.

If you need to request a copy of an estate inventory between 1979 and after 2001 click on the links called “**Beställ uppgifter och kopior från bouppteckning**”...for the year you need.

- **Databases with transcribed material: Released Prisoners**

This is where you can search prisoner lists from various prisons in Sweden between 1876-1939. Do this by:

1. Typing the First name, Last name, Birth year, and Search.
2. Click on the prisoner’s name and then on Image.

- **Databases with transcribed material: Rosenberg’s geographical dictionary**

This is the gazetteer called Geografiskt-Statistiskt handlexikon öfver Sverige. It is a gazetteer from about 1882 – 1883 that has been indexed into a searchable database. It has about 66,000 place names which is good, especially given the historical context, but is quite limited for practical research. Nonetheless, it is a resource that can be helpful at times. You can search this by:

1. Typing a place name into the **Free text** field, or choose a **Parish, Judicial district, or County**. Or you can simply choose a county and parish for a list of place names in a specific parish.

From the Digital Research Room you can also choose **Alphabetical list**. Because the heading states **..alphabetical order, A-Ö**, you might think it is a comprehensive list of resources. It is not, e.g. Inventory of Estates. Still, it is a good list for a wide variety of records.

The remaining 3 tile icons in the Digital Research Room are largely self-explanatory. They are:

### **Recently scanned volumes**

To see what has been recently scanned and published for the **Time period, County, and Type of archive**.

### **Download datasets**

Highlights a variety of interesting and curious items in the Riksarkivet collections including handwritten cookbooks from various time periods, censorship indexes of Swedish film productions, and records of over 300 dairy farms in Skåne.

- **Maps**

If you are looking for historic maps, the easiest way seems to be click on **Alphabetical list** in the Digital Research Room, or the A-Ö tab from the tabs across the top of the page. Once there,

you can search by doing a Ctrl+F and type the letters “**kart**” to look for maps. The Military Archives map and drawing collections (**Krigsarkivets kart-och ritningssamlingar**) is one of the largest collections. Click on Krigsarkivets kart-och ritningssamlingar and then on the Archive drop down menu to see the subcategory collections.

Another important collection of maps are the **Sveriges äldsta storskaliga kartor**. These are 12,000 maps used from the 1600s. These maps were created for tax purposes and can be very interesting for the parish you are working in. At this point, the site is no longer offering a version in English. To find maps:

1. Click on **Visa kartsamlingarna** to look for a map in the province (Landskap) of interest, and then on the links under each province. Once it opens, navigate for the place you are looking for by using the buttons across the top of the viewer.

## National Archives Database - Nationell ArkivDatabas (NAD)

Lastly, you need to be aware of National Archives Database (Nationell ArkivDatabas, NAD) which is the online catalog for the National Archives of Sweden. To find this, you can search in Google “**Nationell ArkivDatabas (NAD)**” or click on the tab called **National Archives Database** at the top of the Digital Research Room page.<sup>3</sup>

On this page you will see 4 tabs, **Search archives**, **Search places**, **Search archival institutions**, and **Att medverka i NAD**. You will use the two first tabs Search archives and Search places the most.

- **Search archives**

This will lead you to the archive listings that show the record type, volumes, and years. For example, type in the name of the parish (use the Swedish letters of Å, Ä, and Ö if needed) and then click on the link that has the parish name next to the word **kyrkoarkiv**. Then:

1. Click on the little **plus symbol (+)** for the record type you need. This opens a list of volumes with more plus symbols. To see a translated list of the record types, see the Swedish Church Records Types and Classification page in the FamilySearch Wiki.<sup>4</sup>
2. Click on the plus symbol for the volume year that you need.
3. From there, another field opens with a link under a title called **Reproducerad på:**
4. Click on the link to open the digital record. This opens a new tab in your web browser. Use the navigation tools across the top of the screen to search the record.

- **Search places**

This will lead you to pages that show the jurisdictional history of a places. For example, type in the name of a parish in the **Place** field and click **Search**. Then click on the link that has the name of the parish by the word **församling** (which means congregation). The next page shows the jurisdictional information such as the **Pastorat** (chapelry), **Stift** (Diocese), **Län** (County), and **Härad** (judicial district) among others.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/nad>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Sweden\\_Church\\_Records\\_Types\\_and\\_Classification](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Sweden_Church_Records_Types_and_Classification)